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A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

OUR ingenuous radicals, who have recently discovered that the Capitalist system is a system of production for profit, deplore each week the successes and excesses of the various dictators who now adorn the map of Europe. Alone, the venerable Bernard Shaw raises his Socialist voice in a praise of these emphatic gentlemen: Comrade Stalin, Il Duce Mussolini, the Ghazi Mustapha Kemal, and the recently naturalized Austrian Aryan, Adolf Hitler. Mr. Shaw rejoices in the progress which these leaders are making in the celebrated direction of "getting something done." How long ago is it since H. G. Wells pilloried the type of fool who thinks that "something" ought to be done?

Recalling without too much melancholia the happy days between 1850, when Mr. Darwin uttered his remarks upon the origin of species, and 1914, when the Western world revealed its hitherto unsuspected enthusiasm for Democracy, one has a sense of progressively intelligent human development. Shaw and Ibsen and Marx really were more mentally alert, more free, more stimulating than T. S. Eliot, Irving Babbitt and Major C. H. Douglas. Intellectual adventure was open to those who were fortunate enough to be alive during those last years of the nineteenth and first years of the twentieth century. It was a time—perhaps the only time since the Renaissance and the early eighteenth century in France—when the illusion was possible that, by developing the human intelligence, life would be made more attractive and more tolerable.

The War put an end to that dream. On a grand scale it was demonstrated that men were never meant to have minds other than those of the machine-made variety. A premium was put upon intellectual dishonesty; the proudest shame of the emancipated intellectuals was that they were as cheaply hysterical as the most obvious hooligan at the street corner. When the captains and the kings departed, a generation arose that sneeringly took for granted values precious to those who had struggled to achieve them, a generation which promptly made it evident that a brave and intelligent movement had been wasted. Clearly, by the War everything had been undone which had occupied the best energies of Western mankind for nearly a hundred years. Bread had been offered, but cake and circuses were the pabulum preferred.

In less metaphorical terms, the circus was provided by the War and the cake takes the shape of several varieties of autocracy. To the normal appetite, cake is a poor substitute for food. To the rational mind, dictatorship is a poor substitute for government. So long as the earth was flat and Heaven was our home, absolutism had a sanction almost, if not actually, Divine. Today our autocrats have to invent their own gods, and there is no more reason why their deities should have any higher standing with intelligent people than those of other theogonies which have had their innings. For good or evil, the ages of faith are gone. Moses and his burning bush were more credible legends than Marx with his American tractor, the Nazarene with His Crucifix a finer symbol than the house-painter with his Hakenkreuz.

It would seem fitting, therefore, since legend there must be, that every country with a dictator should create a Valhalla of pre-War Socialists. Without these charming dreamers, autocracy would be impossible. Their internecine strife made Communism possible in Russia, and Hitlerism in Germany. Mussolini would still be a Socialist if his Party had not failed ignominiously. Only the English could contemplate a Ramsay MacDonald and not proclaim aloud the Divine Right of Kings. In celebrating the hallowed memories of the Socialists of yesteryear, it would be only fitting to build up a little body of folk-lore. At least once a year it might be possible to recall whimsically the affecting naïvetés of the "Stupid Nineteenth Century," as Léon Daudet calls it. People actually believed that obscurantism was undesirable, that pain and cruelty should be abolished. What a theme for a post-War pragmatist, his mind stored with happy thoughts of future chemical warfare.

EDITORIAL NOTE

IF Mr. Owen D. Young, by the expenditure of not very much more than $600 for charity to two small boys asking consideration for their sick mother, can achieve a million dollar return in nation-wide free publicity and esteem, how about a few other millionaires or the people themselves sacrificing a very little for nation-wide equity that will reach all children, all mothers, and all fathers. Is charity cheaper than equity?

—Theodore Dreiser.

RADIO MUSIC GOES HIGHBROW

by DAVID EWEN

WHEN the radio station brings fine music to its audiences by placing a microphone on the concert platform and permitting a famous symphony orchestra to perform unmolested an entire program—as it does in the case of the Philharmonic Symphony Society and Koussevitzky's Boston Symphony Orchestra—the result is artistically felicitous. But, unfortunately, these re-broadcast concerts from symphony halls form only a negligible percentage of the supposedly good music now being heard on the air. The bulk of radio's highbrow music comes directly from the studio, and is guided by the taste, the imagination and the ideas of the higher powers who control radio's destinies. The consequence is that what often promises to be an artistically satisfying program turns out to be just so much charivari.

Most of the good music heard over the air is characterized by the bad taste of guiding hands that know no taste. Someone should take the radio officials aside and tell them confidentially that every decent musical work is a unity—a beginning, a middle and an end inextricably blended into a whole—and that you can't end a composition at any point convenient to the studio clock. In a recent performance of Schönberg's "Verklaerte Nacht," during a Sunday morning musicale, the performers stopped the work in the middle of a phrase—as though it didn't matter to the composition where it ended. Many of the broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera House are to be hooted for the same reason. To plunge an audience haphazardly into the middle of Act I and to desert it in the midst of a sustained high C in the second act, is to give it a pretty blamed poor conception of the artistic intent of the whole work. Music may succeed in surmounting many handicaps, but ill-mannered interruptions for station announcements and sudden amputations when the quarter-hour or half-hour is ended, defeat all the good intentions of the executives in educating a public in the appreciation of fine music.

Bad taste likewise characterizes the performance of the studio orchestras in their occasional symphony programs. Inadequate rehearsals, listless conducting, tired and over-worked orchestra men all combine in producing performances that are invariably sloppy and offensive to any sensitive ear. The studio programs under such radio conductors as Frank Black, Philip James, Howard Barlow, Nicholas Berezowsky, Erno Rapee, *et al.*, are performed so lackadaisically, with so little attention to detail, that the masterpieces of music suffer pitiably. I remember hearing a performance of Tschaikowsky's B-flat Minor Piano Concerto, played by Vera Brodsky and a studio orchestra. The orchestra, during one of its symphonic interludes, became so completely muddled that it was necessary to stop it then and there and have Miss Brodsky play the orchestral part on the piano. I remember hearing performances by the Bamberger Symphony Orchestra, the Columbia Symphony Orchestra and the New World Symphony Orchestra of standard symphonies with such distortion of rhythm, with such a complete lack of balance in the orchestra, that it often required several dozen bars before I could recognize a symphony that I know intimately and well.

In many cases, true, the fault doesn't lie with the conductor. Sufficient rehearsals are denied him; his men are exhausted physically and mentally after a day of hard work and are unable to follow his beat pliantly and alertly. However, even the conductors themselves are often to be blamed for sloppiness. I once attended a rehearsal of an unfamiliar symphony which was to be introduced over a coast-to-coast network by one of the most celebrated of the radio conductors. During the rehearsal, he persistently performed a certain passage in the wrong tempo, distorting the melody beyond recognition. His concert-master at last called the matter to his attention. At first, the conductor was a little embarrassed to be discovered having read the score incorrectly. Then he grinned. "What's the difference?" was his justification. "No one listening to it over the air will know the difference anyway!"

Inadequate rehearsals and carelessness also invariably mark the performances of the leading string-quartets on the air. The Perolé String Quartet is a good group, and its weekly programs are excellent. But its attention to the minutiae of interpretation is so haphazard that it is impossible to listen to the music with any intelligence and understanding. Moreover, because of lack of sufficient rehearsal, its readings of the great chamber works do not yield and bend to the varied requirements of the different composers; it plays everything from Haydn to Bela Bartok in the same mechanized and stilted style. Other string-quartets, such as the NBC String Quartet and the American Pro-Art Quartet—heard regularly over the networks—perform with little balance, taste and understanding; the great music they play appears drab and soiled under their finger-tips.

An inevitable portion of radio's highbrow music consists of dinner-music, sinfoniettas, musicales. Whatever name you give these daily studio features, they all remain photostatically alike: a peculiar grouping of composers and compositions in which Schubert becomes the neighbor of De Koven, and in which "Parsifal" shares time with "Home, Sweet Home"; sophomoric arrangements of the classics for spineless orchestras; re-orchestrations of Mozart and Schumann for combinations that include mandolins or saxophones, until the composers sound as if they were Ferde Grofé's competitors. . . .

Perhaps the loudest grumble against radio's highbrow music is the fact that what can be pure gold is—by some inexplicable magic to which the radio alone has the formula—turned to rank dross. The radio engages Deems Taylor, a competent music critic and skilful composer, to appear regularly, and it converts him into a comedian. It hires the Philadelphia Orchestra for a daily broadcast to mete out musical education in the manner of Dr. Eliot's Harvard Classics—fifteen minutes a day, just enough time to permit advertising announcement, program notes by Mr. Stokowski, station identification, and a few bars of good music. Albert Spalding, a very good violinist, is engaged for a long series to satisfy the musical cravings of radio audiences—but he is hindered from playing anything more satisfying than Dvôrák's "Humoresque", "Love's Old Sweet Song", or Kreisler's sugar-teats. When Felix Salmond brings his inspired 'cello to the studios, it is with the express warning that he is to play nothing more indigestible than the "Londonderry Air." And John McCormack, who once knew better, sports mere tweedle-dee-dums before the microphone.

"WHERE LIFE IS BETTER"

by ERIC HOWARD

THE illustrious equestrian who now serves as governor of the great State of California, "where life is better," has placed his stamp of approval on lynch law and mob violence. The citizenry of the commonwealth of climate and films is divided into two camps: those who admire our governing *caballero*, and those who are horrified by his departure from the sacred democratic theory that even the worst of criminals is entitled to a fair trial before a jury and to the full protection of officers of the law. The controversy rages, involving Mr. Hoover, sometime of Washington; and many nice points are considered in the discussion.

If the sheriff who took his oath of office more seriously than the governor and was consequently injured in defense of the two murderers had died, the discussion would have become more spirited. Perhaps the governor might then have been prosecuted as an accessory before the fact of murder, or manslaughter; or he might have been accused, like so many labor leaders, of inciting to riot. It is even possible that a mob, led by democratic right-thinkers, might have attempted to lynch the governor himself. There would have been some poetic justice in that.

The fine points of the controversy, however, are far less interesting and important than a consideration of the workings of the mob mind. A young man, the son of wealthy parents, was kidnapped, held for ransom, then brutally killed by two who later confessed the crime. Certain psychopathic aspects of the case were suggested, but not openly discussed, by the press. A mob, estimated at from 5,000 to 15,000, lynched the two confessed murderers. Whether or not lynching is ever justified, the puzzling thing about the mob is this: why should 5,000 or 15,000 men unite in an admirable spirit of solidarity to lynch the murderers of a man who means nothing to them, when they won't unite about anything else, even those things which vitally concern them?

Among the lynchers there were probably several thousand men whose bellies were empty, whose clothes were ragged, whose homes (if they have any) were hovels. Do they unite to take action about these conditions? Do they unite to storm the warehouses?

For something like seventeen years, valiant efforts have been made to free Mooney and Billings. The Mooney-Billings case, of course, has a far-reaching significance; it should be a matter of vital concern to every citizen of California. It is of greater importance, to every member of the San Jose mob, than the murder that aroused their passionate fury. Brutal as that murder admittedly was, it was simply one of a long series of murders, less revolting than some, more revolting than others. No mob, of even a few hundred men, has ever demanded the release of Mooney and Billings.

During the harvest season recently past, Mexican and other laborers in the great valleys of California have been subjected to extreme brutality. No mob has demanded justice for them.

A year or two ago, a crooked banker reduced thousands of small investors to poverty, drove many to suicide and caused widespread suffering. Did a mob lynch him? Not at all. And it is not unlikely that he will be paroled.

During the depression, in California cities as elsewhere, hungry seekers of relief have been hounded and harassed by an arrogant bureaucracy, subjected to insult and injury, brow-beaten and cowed—and even, in one case, driven into deadly flames while engaged on work of no consequence. Has a mob ever rebelled against such treatment? Occasionally, a few men have broken up office furniture, but rebellion has never gone further.

Strikers have been clubbed, hunger marchers beaten and gassed by the police, without mob action or protest

Yet all of these injustices, it would seem, are of more importance to the mob than the crime which actually inflamed them.

It is fortunate, indeed, for those in authority and in positions of economic power that the mob seldom fights for itself, but usually in devotion to some abstract principle, such as saving the world for democracy or avenging the murder of a young man of no importance to itself. Most of the San Jose lynchers, being very poor, are in little danger of being kidnapped or murdered. They are in far greater danger of dying of slow starvation and of having their children suffer the diseases resulting from malnutrition.

To some, the mob's failure to fight for itself and its perennial willingness to fight battles having no advantage or profit may prove the divine unselfishness of the human spirit; others may regard it as stupidity beyond comprehension.

It is doubtful if our little Hearstling on horseback has reached either conclusion. He is much too busy opening a rodeo to have time for reflection. But if a mob should ever attempt to release Mooney and Billings, his approval of mob violence will be swiftly withdrawn. In such a case—unluckily hypothetical—the militia would be called out and the mob put down.

AMERICAN SPECTATOR

IT was a miserable little coal mining town. The unemployed, demanding food, were marching in the street. I stopped to watch them. I stood before a small book store and newsstand and wrote out the names of the magazines displayed for sale:

"Sweetheart," "College Humor," "Love Stories," "True Confessions," "Modern Romance," "Love and Romance."

—Sherwood Anderson.

The Editors of The American Spectator observe with interest the ease with which the harassed, underpaid and undernourished populations of Spain and other countries, when they protest, are transformed by our American press from farmers and workers and small tradesmen, not into Communists or Socialists, or even so suspicious a group as Radicals, but into Anarchists. This is achieved by the simple process of lumping them all together and labelling them thus.

NOTES ON THE BACK OF A PASSPORT

by JOHN DOS PASSOS

I

Extinct Volcano: Leningrad in '28.

IT still stays dusk all night. The nearest thing to darkness is a dense bluish gloaming between eleven and two. Not that the days are very bright; occasionally there's a patch of sun, but mostly a low ceiling of grey cloud weighs on the long façades that stretch infinitely into the drizzle on either side of broad, roughly cobbled streets. There's something gutted and worn about the city, it has the feeling of the ruins of a great set-piece the morning after the fireworks.

We wander about, we talk to people, we ask questions. I'm weary all the time trying to hack my way through the dark magnificent thicket of the Russian language.

At the building of the Leningrad Soviet, that used to be the Duma and before that a nobleman's palace, we talk to the doorkeeper, a pompous old party with manners of the old régime. He's had the job since 1906. He's not impressed by the hoarse statements of political leaders, not all human progress makes up to him the shine on a state carriage or on a coachman's hat, or on the rumps of a pair of fat bays.

We take the train to a suburban station in a fir wood. The frame houses scattered among trees and neglected gardens are like the houses in an American residential section of twenty-five years ago—except that the paint has worn off them. The critic my friend has taken me out to see is a very charming man. His English is very good. He asks us to take tea and strawberries with him. (The Leningrad strawberries are the size of peaches and have as much taste as wild strawberries. Queen Victoria and the Kaiser William considered them the best in the world. Dear Nicky used to ship them to his relatives in Germany and England every summer.)

The critic is a man of humanity, refinement, real humor; he knows a great deal. Once he was in the thick of the progressive literary movement. Somehow he missed the red train that left one November. Other friends and associates of his, who also missed it, were able to catch it at stations further down the line. He was left where he stood eleven years ago. He asks, with that timid feverish interest all Russians seem to feel, about the world across the Frontier. It's hard to explain how fast the Europe he knew is crumbling away, leaving a dreary madhouse instead of those pleasant parks and watering places. Life is hard for those who lost the train; the authorities don't let them publish what they want to. The G. P. U. nag their relatives and children; they never know when they are going to be arrested or exiled. Still, he says, in the long run, it's better now for a non-party writer than under the czar, at least you can argue with these censors; they give you reasons; they listen to what you have to say. In the old days you might as well have tried to argue with a gorilla as with the czar's government.

A long trolley ride takes me out to Red Pulitov where I am shown through the locomotive works. There everybody you talk to is lively and hopeful, talks about studying engineering, literature, languages; it's more like going through a college than a mill. And across the wide road, in toward the city, rows on rows of new interesting-looking, comfortable white dwellings are going up.

In the evening the café under the Evropskaya Hotel seems a great relief. Here's something a guy doesn't have to cudgel his brains to understand. It's like Europe. It's like the East Side. Beer, jingly music, white table-cloths, shoddy whores. You can give your order to the waiter and he politely gives you a breaded cutlet. There are real business men at the tables, tricky looking articles (wide awake, we'd say) who will assist you to buy a genuine antique ikon or a young lady's reclining half-hour. There are speculators who will change your dollars for rubles in the black market. It's the kingdom of money again, the blessed land of valuta. After a while the night-life begins to get a stale look, the beer begins to taste sour; best thing to do's to go to bed. It's too drearily obvious that the café's a grimy microcosm of the capitalist world across the Frontier. I'm no Y.M.C.A. secretary, but Red Putilov has somehow taken the edge off it. When I ask my Russian friends about it they laugh and say, "That's the underworld. The police let that place stay open so that they can always know where the criminals are when they want to put their hands on them."

Friends take us to the Aquarium, a famous centre of business men's whoopee under the old régime. Now it's a moving picture studio. Trauberg is directing a picture about the Paris Commune. It's entertaining there—hundreds of women in Eugènie dresses and men with sidewhiskers and tall hats dancing the cancan under the kleig lights; tables, drinks; the sort of place you'd pay money to go to back home. The 1870 costumes don't seem any more antiquated that many things you remember from the world across the Frontier. Why, here's a good lively joint you say to yourself, then it suddenly comes to you that it's all a show, that it's not happening at all, it's a movie studio. But it has the tang of the old before-the-flood bright lights. That's probably why, among antediluvians, actors are the happiest.

When the studio closes up, the directors and some of the actors take the visitors home to a little party. A small Valhalla of smoked and pickled fishes has been laid out; there's a samovar and vodka and warmly modulated talk in several languages. You don't have to understand more than one word in ten to feel the vivid and sometimes scary freedom of the Russian mind. On this side of the Frontier a man may live on potatoes and sour bread but he lives in the real world. If he puts up some stage scenery to keep the wind of too enormous spaces off him he knows it's stage scenery because he had to paint it himself. People lie in the Soviet Union like any place else, but, in this primeval landscape swept clean of all the instituted lies-by-common-consent, a man damn well knows when he's lying and when he's telling the truth. Living in reality is a strain the human race has always done its best to avoid, so it is not surprising that Russians come up to you and ask you wistfully whether Wiesbaden is as pleasant as it used to be.

(*Continued on Page 2, Col. 1*)

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NOTES ON THE BACK OF A PASSPORT

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 4)

Anyway this evening the people we were with seemed happy. In spite of the language, I never spent a pleasanter evening. The visitors were toasted and tossed in a blanket (which is a compliment) and walked home to the hotel through the early glare of a Leningrad summer morning. Peasant women in shawls were selling strawberries along the Nevsky.

Walking 'round Leningrad I have all the time the feeling that I'm walking around in the burnt-out crater of a volcano. Dostoievski's St. Petersburg, the Petrograd of Jack Reed's and Ransome's despatches, still are more vivid in my mind than this huge empty city full of great handsome buildings (we'd call them Georgian or Colonial) that exaggerate as through a megaphone the last words of Vitruvian architecture. No town can make so much history as has been made by the city of Peter and Lenin and not wear itself out, I suppose. Still I kept wishing I'd been there eleven years before. When Kittin and I took the sleeper to Moscow it was like going to bed to wake up a few years forward in the future. Moscow's the crater now.

II

Snapshot: Moscow

Slipping unsurely with numb wet feet on the sleetslimed pavement, the Amerikanski Peesatyel stumbled into the station and found his way dazedly to his compartment in the train. In the train-shed it was like the Moscow winter afternoon outside, only darker and greyer. The dim electric bulbs made no light in the December murk, cold and heavy and grey as pig-iron. Only the steam rising from the engine and our breaths made a little fragile stir of whiteness. The A. Peesatyel was dead tired, his nose was stuffed up with a cold, his stomach was full of cold herring and smoked fish, the vodka of many good-byes had worked up into his head where it weighed and buzzed in an iron crown.

All the day before, all night, all this day he'd slushed through the sleetpitted snow of the streets, climbed grey stairs, tried to explain, to understand explanations, to say things in foreign languages, to ask how, to tell why; had stood face to face with great healthy youthful people in formless grey clothes; had been warmed and moved by the warmth and movement of their faces so alive in the eyes and lips, eyes strained to see beyond the Frontier, beyond next week and next century, lips always forming questions; had left the questions half-answered, half-understood, and had shaken hands. This shaking hands and saying good-bye was like shaking hands with a doctor you were friends with who had come to the door of the operating theatre for a moment to strip off his rubber gloves and smoke a cigarette and to try to explain something to you before he went back to the lights and the blood and the glittering instruments of the theatre where with desperate difficulty a baby was being born.

In the early morning there'd been a long drunken drowsy trip in a taxicab to a suburb where you could hardly see the grey ram-backle houses against the long grey snowbanks disappearing under the grey sky, to visit an old peasant, a sharp-faced toothless man, who'd brought from some Volga villages a whole barrell of lacquered scraps of the middle-ages made up for cash into ashtrays and soup-spoons and cigarette boxes, painted right today in the style of the Byzantine ikon painters; and then back into the murk of Moscow, into the terrible jangling rigadoon of the future again, and more unfinished talks, little glasses of vodka, good-byes.

But all the old habits of thirty years of life are straining away toward the West and carpets and easychairs and the hot and cold both water running and the cheerful trivial accustomed world of shop-windows and women's hats and their ankles neat as trotting horses' above the light hightapping heels and the nonsensical life of advertisements and gimcracks and greenbacks. It's like waiting for the cage that's going to haul you up out of a mine, like getting out of a cement factory, like climbing the long greasy ladder out of the stokehold of a steamboat, like getting away from the rotary presses of a newspaper and stepping out onto the disorganized jingling street.

Groggily the A. Peesatyel dropped his bags in his compartment (anyway made the train) and stepped out on the platform to smoke one more of too many last cigarettes, and stood stamping his numb feet in the grey iron cold of the train-shed under the spiralling beckoning vaguely seen steam. The woman who was a theatre director, the nice genial woman with the broad forehead and the fine dark eyes, had come down to say good-bye; the company came with her, all the fifteenyearolds and eighteenyearolds I'd seen rehearsing the plays for the Sanitary Propaganda Theatre: t' play about avoiding syphilis, the play about cleaning your teeth, the play about the world that will stand up so bright and shining when the dark murky scaffolding of today's struggle is torn away.

"They want to say good-bye," she said as I was shaking the hard unwieldy hands (they were all factory workers in the day-time and actors at night), under the probing of so many blue eyes curious and friendly, wanting to be told, to be with, to understand, to cross all these faraway frontiers. "They want to know", she said. "They like you very much, but they want to ask you one question. They want you to show your face. They want to know where you stand politically. Are you with us?"

The iron twilight dims. The steam swirls around us. We are muddled by the delicate crinkly steam of our breath, the iron crown tightens on the head, throbbing with too many men, too many women, too many youngsters, seen, talked to, asked questions of, too many hands shaken, too many foreign languages badly understood. . . . "But let me see. . . . But maybe I can explain. . . . But in so short a time . . . there's no time." The train is moving. I have to run and jump for it. They are gone in a swirl of steam, rubbed out by the iron-grey darkness. The train has pulled out of the station and is rumbling westward.

I fall into my bunk in the too stuffy, too rumbling, too drowsyhot compartment, and roll over and go to sleep.

In connection with liberty of conscience and freedom of speech here in America, how about the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Belford, of Brooklyn, and his views of the Rev. Father Coughlin, together with his opinion of Alfred E. Smith? Could all this be said to be intimately connected with Catholic dogma, and so to be transgressing it, or is it viewed, rather, as interference with some purely political program of the Church, which is said not to be in politics? If the latter, how about the public performances of the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin?

CITYSCAPES

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON

THE Guggenheim. . . . The applications pour in. Since the depression, the number of applications from young scientists, students and doctors has not increased much but, among the young writers, painters, sculptors, etc., my understanding is that it is rather a flood. As for the painters, they are asked to send in samples of their work. An empty store room is rented and three or four painters, their reputations already made, are asked to come in and pass on them. I gather there is a process of slow selection. I suspect that it is something like this:—Sometime ago I took to Dreiser the work of a young writer I admired. He looked at it. "Huh," he said, "of course you would like his work. He writes like you."

I was speaking to a young writer of real ability, one who applied for the Guggenheim and didn't get it. "This is the way I did it," she said. "I thought up a project that I thought would impress them. It wasn't what I wanted to do at all. I wanted some money so I would have time to tell a very simple story. I thought I would get the money or the big sounding project and then do as I pleased." She didn't get it. If she had told them what she told me she might have. Who knows?

* * *

Waxey Gordon. . . . I spoke to one of the jurors who helped send Waxey, the beer baron, to his reward . . . a fine of eighty thousand . . . ten years in prison. The juror told me about it. Waxey went on the stand. He didn't have to and the tip was that his attorneys put him on because, in a similar case, income tax evasion, the big banker Mitchell went on and got away with it. The banker came clear. The juror said . . . "when we got into the jury room we were all sorry for Waxey. We thought he was guilty all right but he had made such a pitiful showing on the stand. Then we got indignant. After the showing the big bankers made down in Washington we thought we had a right to expect something better from the big racketeers. To find out they were the same kind of weak-kneed saps as the big bankers was just too much."

* * *

In a city court room. . . . A thick-necked Austrian father had his daughter up, wanting to have her put on probation. The girl was perhaps nineteen and very pretty. She had a job in a small restaurant at ten dollars a week and did not often go to church. Sometimes she went out, to a dance or a party, and stayed out until after midnight. She had a young woman friend who had once been divorced. The magistrate kept trying to find out what was wrong with the girl. "I want her to obey me," the father kept saying. Once, when she came home quite late and the father kicked up a row, the girl told him to go to hell. In the court room she kept looking at her father with cold indifference and the magistrate kept trying to explain that the girl, having been born in America and raised in America, was an American woman. "I would have to put all the women and girls in America on probation if it came to a question of their obeying either fathers or husbands," the magistrate said.

The father couldn't or wouldn't understand. He kept saying the same thing over and over. "She is my daughter. I want peace. I want her to obey me."

"Shut up," the magistrate said. He was tired of it. The father's thick neck got more and more red and he tramped out of the court room. The young woman, I presume, went back to her job.

* * *

The extra overcoat. . . . The man told me about the trouble he had with his extra overcoat. He said he had two. They were both last year's coats but pretty good yet. He had a job but his wages had been cut. Men without overcoats kept ringing his door-bell and asking for an overcoat. He kept refusing. It got on his nerves, he said. He said he got more and more bitter about the matter. "Look here," he said, "didn't Hoover or someone talk about two automobiles. If a man can have two automobiles, why not two overcoats?" He had a brown coat and a black one. He liked them both. "Sometimes I liked to wear one, sometimes the other," he said. He didn't want to give either of them away.

He said he must have got a bit hysterical. He couldn't sleep. He lived in a New York suburb and men without overcoats kept ringing his door-bell when he was at home in the evening.

And then, one night, after three men had come to his door, asking for a coat and he had dismissed them all . . . he cursed the last one . . . he suddenly, in the night, when he couldn't sleep, got out of bed and went down into the cellar. He took one of the coats, the black one, and threw it into the furnace. "Wasn't I a damn fool?" he said. "That's the kind of a damn fool I am."

The Editors of The American Spectator calculate that, what with untaxed and profit-making religious schools, universities, boys' and girls' orphanages, hospitals, shrines, cemeteries, Little Flowers, religious retreats, sanitaria, lodging houses, hotels, cathedrals, churches, parish houses and real estate adventures in general, the wealth of Christ must transcend by many billions the combined fortunes of the Rockefellers, Morgans, Mellons, Duponts and who not else. Starting as a carpenter, the humble Nazarene appears to have established an all-time mazuma high.

SERVANTS OF GOD
No. 19

United Press Dispatch to the Scranton (Pa.) Times:

JONESBORO, ARK.—A three years' church war in Jonesboro resulted today in the death of John McMurdo, sixty-eight-year-old watchman of the Jonesboro Tabernacle.

He died of gunshot wounds inflicted by Rev. Dale Crowley, militant evangelist.

THE WORST BOOK OF THE MONTH

MOTS-DÉLUGE: HYPNOLOGUES

By Eugène Jolas

5½ x 7½. Pp. 204

Paris: Editions des Cahiers Libres

AMBROSE LIGHT

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

WHENEVER I meet a man with a pretense to sagacity in the matter of American *belles lettres*, I have an annoying habit of asking him his opinion of the late lost, strayed or stolen Mr. Ambrose Bierce. If, upon the question, he imparts to me a crisp wink, I put him down in my mental files as a fellow worth cultivating. If, on the other hand, he goes into an encomiastic clog, I dismiss him as one whose critical faculties have still not outgrown their adolescence. For I believe that an admiration of Bierce, among men of my generation, is invariably an unconscious hangover from the enthusiasm of their youth, when an epigram —provided only it were sufficiently cynical—was the last word in worldly wisdom and when any story of the occult in which the tall grass was mysteriously agitated by something (spelled with a capital S) was a dark-shudderful masterpiece.

Bierce's persistent reputation as an eminento of letters is undoubtedly due to these long-pants laudators with an unrevoked short-pants rapture. Certainly a sedulous scrutiny of his collected works reveals little adult basis for it. He was, at his best, little more—in "The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter" (a paraphrase of a translation by Danziger of Richard Voss)—than a prelusive George Sylvester Viereck; little more—in "Can Such Things Be?" and "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians"—than a somewhat superior *Black Cat* magazine writer. His fables in "Cobwebs From an Empty Skull" and in "Fantastic Fables" are second-rate Alfred Polgar and fifth-rate Dunsany. And as for his "Write It Right", the title itself provides abundantly illuminating criticism. As editor of *The Argonaut* and *The Wasp*, Bierce had his points, but his so-called Prattle columns, which he contributed for years to the San Francisco *Examiner*, when re-read today seem pitiably weak and empty beside the columns of such men as Heywood Broun, Don Marquis, *et al.*

It is the consistent custom of Bierce's champions, however, to meet any such derogatory appraisal of his literary performances with the proud exclamation, "Ah, but what of 'The Devil's Dictionary'!" This "Devil's Dictionary" is not only one of their powerful legends, but one of literary America's at large. It is held out as the paragon of true and devastating wit, the trump of polished, crystallized acid. Well, take a look at it. I open it and quote a few samples from under the A's alone; they sufficiently suggest the flavor of what is under the B's, C's, D's and on to the Z's:

> Abasement, *n.* A decent and customary mental attitude in the presence of wealth or power. Peculiarly appropriate in an employee when addressing an employer.
>
> Abdication, *n.* An act whereby a sovereign attests his sense of the high temperature of the throne.
>
> Abscond, *v.i.* To "move in a mysterious way," commonly with the property of another.
>
> Academe, *n.* An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught. Academy, *n.* (from academe) A modern school where football is taught.
>
> Admiral, *n.* That part of a war-ship which does the talking while the figure-head does the thinking.
>
> Admonition, *n.* Gentle reproof, as with a meat-axe.
>
> Affianced, *pp.* Fitted with an ankle-ring for the ball-and-chain.
>
> Ambidextrous, *adj.* Able to pick with equal skill a right-hand pocket or a left.
>
> Anoint, *v.t.* To grease a king or other great functionary already sufficiently slippery.
>
> Apothecary, *n.* The physician's accomplice, undertaker's benefactor and grave worm's provider.
>
> Appeal, *v.t.* In law, to put the dice into the box for another throw.
>
> April Fool, *n.* The March fool with another month added to his folly.
>
> Architect, *n.* One who drafts a plan of your house, and plans a draft of your money.
>
> Armor, *n.* The kind of clothing worn by a man whose tailor is a blacksmith.
>
> Arsenic, *n.* A kind of cosmetic greatly affected by the ladies, whom it greatly affects in turn.

One speculates as to the origins of the notion that Bierce was a considerable somebody. Like the late Richard Harding Davis, he had a superficially impressive front and a superficially impressive manner: these, as they often do, may have contrived to make certain impressionable men confound the big brass sign outside the bank for the amount of gold in its vault. He had, in addition, a romantic Civil War record, and a romantic war record isn't a bad asset to any writer, particularly in the minds of his contemporary critics who have served in the commissary department, or as pot-toters in field hospitals and butlers to the General's horse. And there were a number of such in the Civil War. Further, in the San Francisco of his day, Bierce—with his large manner and small competence—was a big toad in a little hole. He looked important; he comported himself importantly; he spouted importantly. He possessed the faculty of investing himself with a certain degree of awesomeness, like a movie actor in the city to the South today who has a Picasso in his bathroom and has once had a Duke stay over-night in his house. What was more, he had that most precious of all speciously impressive gifts: the air of a man who always seemed superior and independent and, even when without a sou in the world, at perfect and lofty ease among those with ample funds.

In every smaller city, there is always some writer or newspaper man who is singled out for matinée idolizing by his cronies and certain of the town folk. It is a matter partly of local pride and partly of the average man's insistent need to number among his friends and acquaintances someone, however essentially dubious, to talk about, brag about, and in a degree look up to. In every newspaper office in every such city there is one such hero. Bierce was the selection in the San Francisco of his time. And it was not long thereafter that he was advertised broadcast by his loving friends in the same ecstatic breath as the California climate, the size of the redwood trees, the sunset on the Golden Gate, and the one-dollar girls in Chinatown.

The first and biggest fall-guy was that charming fellow, the late Percival Pollard. Percy—God rest his good soul—was the greatest discoverer of his critical period. Hardly a week passed that he didn't discover a tremendous genius in one corner of the globe or another. In his day, Percy discovered geniuses by the wholesale and by the freight carload. The only trouble with the great majority of his geniuses was that they didn't seem to have much noticeable talent. But that never deterred Percy, as a glance through his critical manifestos will attest. Percy's geniuses ranged all the way from *Schuhplättler* in Munich cabarets to female Polish mystics and from mural-painter graduates of comic weeklies to the more comely French young girl aphrodisiac poets. And in due time and in the natural course of events, Bierce took his place in the Pollard Hall of Fame. That was the send-off, and it was not very long afterward that the younger critics, offshoots of the old *Criterion* school of which Percy was a constitutent, began on their own imitatively to discover Bierce all over again. It is these younger critics, now grown to more or less venerable manhood, who—along with their still small and enthusiastic Bierce-reading sons—continue to foster the Bierce legend.

CIVILIZATION REACHES THE WHITE MAN

by MONTAGUE GROVER

THE white man is at last becoming civilized—in Australia, at all events. Public opinion has been aroused by the decision of the Federal Government to send a "punitive expedition" against the aboriginal blacks of Caledon Bay, in the far North, and aroused so fiercely that the Government has watered down its course of action until the "punitive expedition" is to be little more than a social call.

The expedition was decided upon as the result of several murders committed by the blacks. These blacks are primitive people, so-called savages. They occupy an area of Australia into which others than aborigines are not supposed to trespass. They live by hunting wild animals, by fishing, and by grubbing edible roots out of the ground. Their weapons and implements are of wood or stone. They wear no clothing whatever, except for ceremonial purposes, and build no houses, being content with the shelter of a strip of bark or a dislodged branch from a tree. They speak no English and probably the vast majority of them have never seen a white man.

These facts have to be remembered in summing up the acts of what are to-day the most primitive people on earth. And it is these facts which have, until recently, led to the general acceptance of the half-baked ethnologists' description of the aborigines as the most degraded type of humanity. But they have their own code, their own virtues. They have raised manual dexterity to such a pitch of perfection that the writer has seen a young buck walk along the bank of a creek, throw half a dozen sticks of various sizes into the stream, and leave behind a row of dead fish, each killed by a stick. Described as treacherous and murderous, he and his fellows in Western Australia only a year or two back had two foreign aviators, engaged in a world flight, crash down in their midst. The populous Eastern states, knowing that the accident had occurred, reported that they had been killed by the blacks—"and eaten," added one imaginative writer. When the aviators were located by search parties, it was found that they owed their lives to the kindness and consideration of the primitive "savages" among whom they had fallen.

It is necessary to realize that the abo. has been a much maligned man in order to grasp what has just taken place in Australia. The shores in the vicinity of Caledon Bay are frequented by Japanese luggers in search of pearl-shell. It is the custom of these Japs to take abo. women aboard the luggers, make merry with them, and then land them anywhere along the coast—the Caledon Bay variant of "having to walk home." This happened a few months ago, and when six Japanese sailors landed, ostensibly to obtain water, the outraged husbands and brothers of the last batch of shanghaied women promptly speared them.

A protest was made. Unofficially it is said that the Japanese government, always held in great respect, not to say fear, by Australian governments, passed a hint that it expected "justice" to be done. The Commonwealth sent out a mounted policeman who entered the territory supposed to be sacred to the aborigines. He also was speared. The Government then decided on its "punitive expedition."

But the unexpected happened. In the past such "punitive expeditions" did not worry the people of the big towns. In the good old days of thirty years ago, whenever some blacks speared station cattle or committed a similar offense, the Queensland state government used to send out a posse of police and civilians to "disperse" the blacks. A dispersal was a polite term for surrounding a camp of perhaps half a dozen, perhaps half a hundred, abos. and coolly shooting them down with rifle fire. But the white man has sloughed some of his savagery apparently. Northern and Central Australia are no longer unknown lands, and the abo. is no longer merely regarded as a "black cow" who kills the steers of the man who killed his kangaroos. Scientists have invaded the back-blocks and the abo. has been studied without prejudice and without hatred. The result is that he has been found to be a human being "much like me and you". The findings of the scientists have filtered to the public, and the mission stations in the Never Never have fortunately included men who think as much of the bodies of their charges as they do of their souls. Many of these missionaries, too, feel themselves charged with a sacred duty to obtain all possible knowledge of this last surviving race of the stone age before it is finally swept away.

The Government decision aroused a storm of resentment—such a storm that it receded speedily from its original intention and substituted, for a so-called punitive expedition, an expedition of investigation. On top of this came a message from Groote Island mission, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, stating that the stories of its grave dangers from the Caledon Bay blacks, put forth officially, were so much hooey. The missions' headquarters in the cities sought to accentuate the discomfiture of the Government by sending an expedition of their own, to go unarmed through the supposed danger area, but were dissuaded from such theatrical display by some of the more sober in their own bodies. So the expedition of investigation proceeds and it is safe to say that it will proceed cautiously. There will be no killing of blacks, unless there should be an attack by them; there will be no indiscriminate shooting; and the farce of looking for the murderer of the policeman will be played out solemnly, to be embodied in a Government report full of polysyllables and laid on the table of the House of Representatives and forgotten.

But one thing stands out. This is the first time that the case of the abos. has been put and the first time that the people of the Australian cities have voiced their view that the massacre and oppression of a body of defenseless people must cease. It is the first time and it will be the last time. The record of the white Australian toward the colored people in his country has been just as appalling as the record of the white American in North America, the white Spaniard in South America, the white Belgian in the Congo, and the white Frenchman in Morocco. It is a pleasant sign; a sign that the white man is becoming civilized at last.

REQUIRED READING

"The bestowal of that prize [*the Nobel Prize for Literature*] is frequently a little puzzling, but it has seldom gone to anyone who was not in the advance guard of the moderns."—Dorothea Brande in *The American Review*, January, 1934.

Required Reading: The following *twenty-one* Conservatives out of *thirty-two* Nobel prize-winners: René François Armand Sully-Prudhomme, Frédéric Mistral, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Rudyard Kipling, Rudolf Eucken, Selma Lagerlöf, Paul Heyse, Maurice Maeterlinck, Rabindranath Tagore, Verner von Heidenstam, Henrik Pontopiddan, Karl Gjellerup, Carl Knut Hamsun, Jacinto Benavente, William Butler Yeats, Ladislaw Reymont, Henri Bergson, Erik Axel Karlfeldt, Ivan Bunin.

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SEEMS LIKE IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW

by STANLEY K. WILSON

GOOD English is supposed to be amenable to standard and to precept. There are definite rules. Clarity, economy, force, color—you can find out how to achieve them. The "don'ts" are specific. The blemishes have all been tabulated: "fine" writing, labored eloquence, miles of adjectives, blind faith in the cliché, deliberate or helpless obscurity. And yet writing, today, much of it at all events, presents a staggering anomaly. It is an air-tight example of the failure of know-how. The expert in writing is left at the post by the tyro. Major critical acclaim goes to writers who most conspicuously don't know how to write. That's a pretty harsh indictment, but I think it can be supported. I'll bring up my witnesses in a minute or two.

The specimen authors I wish to examine (I shall muster only four of them) have the critics with them. They've been received with laurels, although not in every case with showers of blessing in the guise of sales. They are hailed as exemplars. They're in danger of becoming founders of "schools." One of them at least—and he is the one I'm going to be particularly noisy about—is held by many to be the most distinguished literary figure of the American day.

The names on my black-list write fluently and in the main grammatically; but they write badly all the same, because they don't know how to handle their literary materials. And I'll launch my case on evidence drawn from the most fulsomely praised of contemporary American writers, potential White Hope of the new world, the man of whom Arnold Bennett said, "He writes like an angel"—yes, children, I mean William Faulkner.

Take off your coats with me, and plunge into "Light in August," Faulkner's most recent novel. You don't have to read far before—well, try this excerpt from pp. 2-3:

> ". . . . gaunt, staring, motionless wheels rising from mounds of brick rubble and ragged weeds with a quality profoundly astonishing, and gutted boilers lifting their rusting and unsmoking stacks with an air stubborn, baffled and bemused upon a stumppocked scene of profound and peaceful desolation, unplowed, untilled, gutting slowly into red and choked ravines beneath the long quiet rains of autumn and the galloping fury of vernal equinoxes."

Two dozen adjectives in one sentence: what would George Gissing (to name offhand a novelist who wrote like a *craftsman*) have said of such a page! Sophomoric exhibitionism? Inflation with a capital "I"? And not even a trenchant display of vocabulary. Two repeats: the threadbare "profound" and "gut"—incidentally wrenched to the intransitive. Only two splashes of unhackneyed color: "stumppocked," good enough, but spoiled by the arrogant omission of the hyphen—an irritating trick that this author runs to, *cf* "hookwormridden," "limpeared," "closed-to," "wiresends," "manlooking," "crossslanted" (3 successive s's); and "galloping fury of equinoxes," which is pretty spotty after all, since the equinox is not a storm but the time when it may occur.

Overworked similes team up in Faulkner with overworked words. Thus, "like a forgotten bead from a broken string" is followed three pages later by "like a shabby bead upon the mild red string of road" and this in turn three lines below by "like already measured thread being rewound onto a spool."

Slipshod English thrusts in everywhere: "She had not opened it a dozen times hardly before she discovered that she should not have opened it at all."

Reckless and meaningless usage: "the wagon crawls terrifically toward her."

All the above angelicisms are to be found in the first eight pages of "Light in August."

To go drearily on. "Armstid grunts, a sound savage, brusque," p. 10; ". . . a . . . gray garment worn savage and brusque," p. 14; thirteen lines later, "with the abrupt savageness of a man"; two lines later, "She clashes the stove savagely"; eleven lines later, "savage finality"; nine lines later, "savage screw of gray hair." Ho, hum!

Let's take to our own pinions now and skip to p. 107 where we find this:

> "On all sides, even within him, the bodiless fecundmellow voices of negro women murmured. It was as though he and all other manshaped life about him had been returned to the lightless hot wet primogenitive Female."

Another merciful jump. Beginning of Ch. VI:

> "Memory believes ! foxe knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders. Knows remembers believes a corridor in a big long garbled cold echoing (*Sacadie-Tivessinarose*) building of dark red brick soothbleakened by more chimneys than its own, set in a grassless cinderstrewn-packed compound surrounded by smoking factory purlieus and enclosed by a ten foot (*why not tenfoot?*) steel-and-wire fence like a penitentiary or a zoo, where in random erratic surges, with sparrowlike childtrebling, orphans in identical and uniform blue denim in and out of remembering but in knowing constant as the bleak walls, the bleak windows where in rain soot from the yearly adjacenting chimneys streaked like black tears."

The fact is, so far from writing like an angel William Faulkner writes like the devil. Don't get this wrong. I'm not talking rules. I'm forgetting the sour syntax. But it's fustian. It's wind. Showing-off. Spluttering fireworks. Clumsy. Chaotic. Attitudinizing. Just dambadwriting, that's all, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise. He simply doesn't know how to use his literary materials. The only things Faulkner has that can conceivably explain his vogue are, first, a completely sincere unshackling of assorted "bastards" and "sons of bitches"; second, removal of all inhibitions on "vomit"; and, third, a most articulate nose for Negro smells.

These are mildly provocative but hardly broad enough to support his reputation. No, there's only one conclusion (you've seen it coming): It's precisely his bad writing that has "made" William Faulkner; the mess he makes of his literary materials is so overpowering that the critics can't classify it, and helplessly decide it must be great. And the dumb public strings along. Ergo, it seems like it's better if you don't know how.

Then there's George Davis, another and scarcely less luminous White Hope. Hullabaloo for his first novel, "Opening of a Door." He's a more sophisticated sinner. Harder to catch out. Davis' crimes are two: a maddening use of ellipsis and non-sequitur and, even more reprehensible, a wanton misuse of words that amounts to perverted genius. Probably he thinks—and no doubt the critics do—that his stuff is fresh, different. But writing does not achieve freshness and difference by flying in the face of sense. Grant that there's a reaching out in this author for new combinations, fresh chords; and that there's a clear purpose to avoid the trite and the hackneyed. The writing is still bad. His tools aren't sharp enough. He doesn't know what to do with his literary materials. Mere startling propinquity of words never before yoked is not enough, is not the mark of a mature craftsman. Much of his stuff skirts the ridiculous or definitely lands in bathos. Read these sample exhibits from "Opening of a Door":

p. 9 "He left behind of his spirit the savagery of a gentle smile." (Both savage and gentle?)

p. 29 "The amber soprano was warm and moving."

p. 36 " . . . she lifted her hand to the short iron flow of her hair."

p. 48 "He viewed it (the traffic) with cold passion. His attention *slid longingly from the steel excitement to the surge of* passing faces."

p. 53 "The morning was marine. Trains waited their turn, like swimmers, for that last hurtling clean cut into the blue."

p. 97 "Words that had been to Aunt Theodora a lucent gesture of amity were to Aunt Flora but the evil flirtation of ignis fatuus through sunken labyrinths."

p. 97 " . . . a scarlet glint of fear passed through her milk blue eyes."

p. 185 "Aunt Theodora heard the clang of exultant evil." (You can't hear the clang of evil.)

p. 194 "Together they were pitiless . . . as her strength failed he lifted her up, captured her numbed, melancholy mouth between implacable teeth. Cruel, cruel; they triumphed in the moment. The spirit, divinely pyrotechnic, burst its cold stars."

You can't deny that this author is a master of oxymoron—and the ox-brained Ipse-dixit critics as well as the "You-said-it" morons have got him wrong as a heaven-sent genius of writing.

Robert Cantwell's "Laugh and Lie Down" and Isabel Paterson's "Never Ask the End" round out the quartette. These books have enjoyed a remarkable press. I've yet to find anyone who could finish either (suggested revise of Mrs. Paterson's title: "Never Reach the End.") Why? Well, it isn't easy to quote damagingly from these novels. They don't hurl gaucheries at you. The style is spare, smooth, economical. You read the words easily enough. But after a page or two—what on earth is the author driving at? The sense has eluded you. Holes in the meaning! You go back. Maybe you were just dopey—or something. Then it dawns on you. Whether wilfully or not, these authors are fumbling their literary opportunities. This writing is ineffective writing. You may not laugh, but you lie down.

What is the answer? Are these two mock novels deliberate *tours de force*, tongue-in-cheek assaults upon the gullibility of the public? Their gratuitous ellipses and pervasive clinging fogginess seem a bit too thick to be wholly accidental. But even that posit does not absolve these authors. Whether they can write better or not is beside the point. In "Laugh and Lie Down" (the title alone makes me want to "rare up") and "Never Ask the End" they didn't write well. They didn't so much as write intelligibly. Yet the fact remains that these two books won several sets of very florid bays. It is these books and not the authors' *good* writing that "made" them. When they abused their literary materials they won the critics' awards. Parenthetically, it is enlightening to reflect that Mrs. Paterson's earlier novels, written in a strong clear style, took no prizes either "literary" or popular. The critics could understand *them*—and accordingly pronounced them only so-so. It wasn't until both she and Robert Cantwell began to write as badly as they could that they became potentially immortal.

It would be tempting to digress here to pose the question, Who's to be the judge? For if rules and precedents are scrapped it's everyone for himself and the critic no better than you or I. And as a matter of fact nearly everybody thinks he can criticize writing. The dumb-cluckier he is, the more dogma he is likely to air. Just drop the sentence "Two words does it" into a casual group and find out for yourself. Or, to stick closer to our knitting, ask your friends whether "light" in August is different from that in any other month and if that's not the meaning what is and what the hell has it got to do with the book anyway Maybe you're muffing some highfalutin imaginative twist, tell 'em—and then wait to be told. Or go up a little higher and ask the professional critic what he means when he says a style is distinctive but not distinguished; and what on earth a distinguished style is; and does it embrace "womanshenegro" and "vomit" and "bastard," or is it "glimpsed" through forests of atrophied adjectives; and who the deuce is he anyhow to make up decisions for you out of his own head?

The "sonofabitch" probably never read beyond the first eight pages himself.

NATHAN DIGESTS THE THEATRE

"JEZEBEL" (*Owen Davis*)—M. Davis, a playwriting zombie out of the later eighteen-hundreds, stalks the modern theatrical scene with another morgue extract, this one a Schauspiel of the Old South, replete with superannuated hokum.

"The First Apple" (*Lynn Starling*)—O

"The Lake" (*Dorothy Massingham* and *Murray MacDonald*)—Badly confused effort to mix a little Chekhov with a lot of boiled-over Henry Arthur Jones, the result being even worse Massingham-MacDonald.

"The Locked Room" (*Herbert Ashton, Jr.*)—Junk.

"Yoshe Kalb" (*I. J. Singer* and *F. Blocki*)—Second Avenue Yiddish drama translated into English and brought to Broadway where, as a consequence, it was unintelligible.

"Big-Hearted Herbert" (*Sophie Kerr* and *A. S. Richardson*)—A farce-comedy blank.

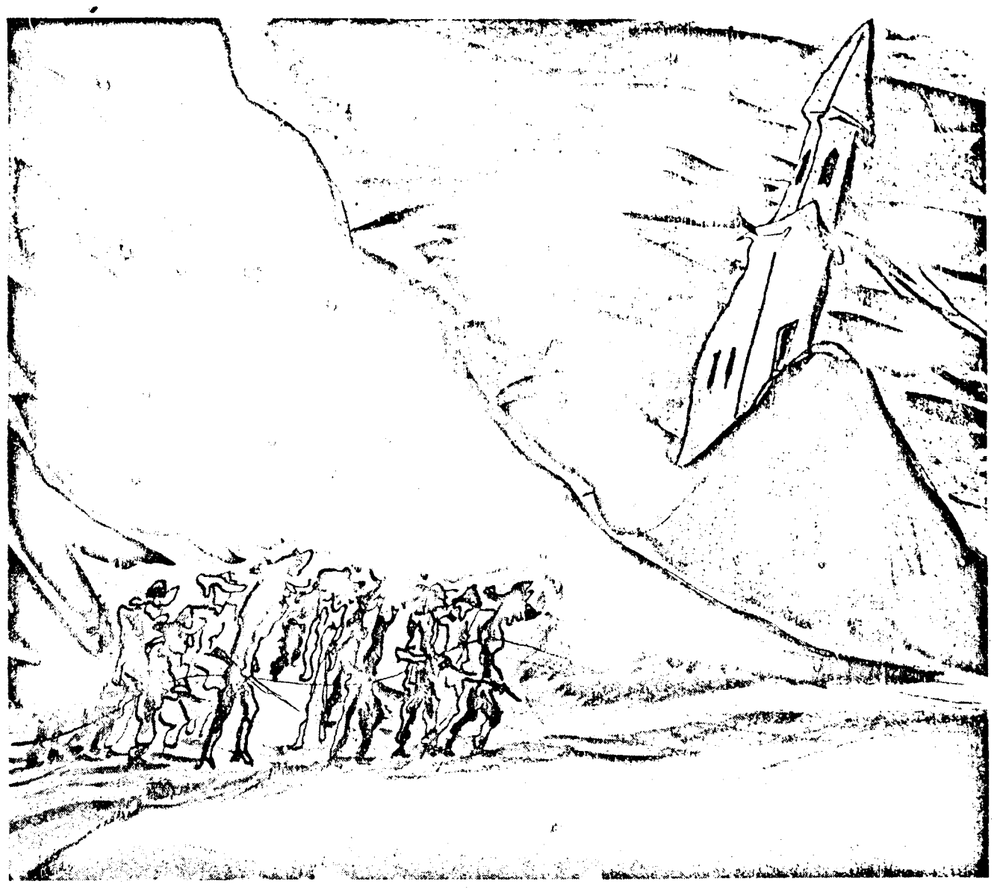
"Halfway to Hell" (*Crane Wilbur*)—All the way to Hollywood.

"The Gods We Make" (*G. H. McCall* and *S. B. de Losier*)—Terrible.

"Days Without End" (*Eugene O'Neill*)—It ranks with "Welded" and "Dynamo" as one of its author's worst.

"Oliver Oliver" (*Paul Osborn*)—Fair comedy, but greatly inferior to Osborn's "Vinegar Tree."

"A Divine Moment" (*R. H. Powel*)—Whew!



The New South —*Hubert Davis*

THE SOUTH AND THE NIGGER

by MERLIN N. HANSON

QUITE unwittingly, the Southerner has provided the darkey with schools and various kinds of training, and this education is bringing out a class of skilled laborers and expert professional men. One should remember, where schools are concerned, that the person with as little as one thirty-second of Negro blood is barred from white institutions. Woe unto the one who creeps by and sits with the sisters and brothers of the lily-white skin! But the Negro's standard of living, forced to the low level of corn bread and turnip greens, has, interestingly enough, resulted in hardy dusky-skinned workmen whose towering strength offers more than serious competition to the white man, for it very often replaces him. And nearly all of this replacement comes from the full-blooded darkey. For those with a high percentage of white blood have absorbed too many refinements from the Southerner to mingle with the "niggers," yet they are ignored by the race which lightened their skin. That sad section of men and women, generally accepting their plight stoically, lives almost in seclusion, or finds friends now and then among the low caste whites. But it constitutes a lost race.

These other Negro workmen, however, are apparently unaware of the advantageous position which they now occupy, and from which they snatch work from the eager hands of the white man. Nevertheless, this subjection of the Negro to frugality has been rewarded by the development of a slowly moving tide of brown, which is now reaching back toward its origin. White workmen, as well as other individuals identified with the labor movement, its union leaders, admit their plight, but with bitterness. "We must make the nigger raise his standard of living to our own level, or we are lost," one of them recently lamented. "He competes with us now in nearly every line of work, and always can underbid us." And one of the other ironies of this amusing situation is that, quite frequently, public officials who have flapped to victory on the wings of the Democratic rooster, symbolic of white supremacy, turn about and award work to the darkey, for he does it just as well and cheaper.

But the contention that the nigger must be kept in his place vanishes where the Negress is concerned, for many whites claim they make better mistresses than their pale sisters. The Negro harlot walks the same streets as the white prostitute, she lives in the same district, consorts with the same men, and in this phase of life also underbids.

Yet the cruel treatment of the male Negro comes mainly from that element which consorts with dark-skinned women. White men can venture forth, attack a Negress, and be fined five dollars for disorderly conduct by a contemptuous judge; but let a colored man try something of the sort in another direction! An insane Negro was once shoved into the docket room of a jail to be charged with rape. He had been discharged from the asylum before he was cured. Officers in the room knew the man to be insane and yet, while prowling about the wild-eyed darkey, sneered at his captor for making the arrest.

"Why didn't you shoot him right where you got him?" they snarled at the policeman. "You could have claimed self-defense. You're a damn fool!"

And finally, two of the most urgent and contemptuous of the cops, black blood-lust moving them, lunged forward, while a local reporter pranced gleefully about, hoping to participate in the approaching orgy of torture—probably death. Fortunately, an alert and more cautious superior officer leaped to the side of the accused man, who was utterly unaware of his danger, and routed the would-be attackers by booming threats of suspension or dismissal.

While preparations were being made to take the Negro to a place of "safety," a mob formed near the edge of the town. Two look-outs were dispatched to inform the mob as soon as the Negro, with his intentionally small guard, started from the jail to the railroad station. The mob waited patiently, then not so patiently. The train arrived and actually left with the Negro unmolested. Later in the night, when the two look-outs were at last located, they were found as drunk as judges, and had forgotten all about their pious duty.

There is another case in which a Mobile man disappeared while hunting at a camp about forty miles north of that city. Eight Negro woodchoppers, who happened to be working in the vicinity, were arrested, and ten separate confessions wrung from them over a period of three or four days and nights. What confessions! What confusion! The pitiful efforts of ignorant black men struggling to satisfy their white masters! Then, one day, while the woodchoppers were aiding officers in a search for the body of the missing man (it was never found), one of the Negroes slipped overboard into hip-deep water. Eight hours later, according to police doctors, he died of "pneumonia." Mobile physicians laughed. It was the first case on record where pneumonia had been fatal in less than three days. But the nigger must know who is boss; his flesh is worth forty cents a pound when he turns state's evidence.

Two of us representing newspapers finally penetrated that jungle and had been working on the story only a short time when scowling people began threatening us. A return to Mobile was necessary, and when we again went back to that wild desolate bit of so-called civilization, we were not only heavily armed, but had the hardest shooting man on the Mobile police force as body guard. But the thing to be noted is that those people had the most remarkable "grapevine" system I have ever seen. Every move we made, and many of the things we said, were run out to the most remote sections until every person encountered knew who we were, what was wanted, and made duplicate statements to all questions. The investigation was short lived; we were not only in danger, but were uncovering too much third-degreeing in connection with the eight blacks.

When those Negroes went to trial, a local holiday was declared; the schools were closed so the town-folk of all ages could witness the gestures of a court of justice. The accused men are now serving life terms.

Of course, there is a different attitude toward the monied Negro. While he is the victim of another form of hatred—that of a flaming, vicious envy— he is not quite so harshly treated; in instances, he is almost fawningly received. But this does not alter his social position to any considerable degree; he is still a "nigger." The name of a married Negro woman cannot be used in a Southern newspaper, even in police news, for it necessitates employing *Mrs.* in front of her name, and that must not be used in the South. Yet, as I chance to know, there was one city editor who always kept a copy of *The Pittsburgh Courier*, a Negro newspaper, in his desk, because he liked its flashy make-up and copied it in his sheet. And here and now I am violating a sacred Southern dogma by capitalizing the word "Negro."

But this gross injustice, this brutality by the police and prison guards, is not restricted to the Negro alone; by some metamorphosis of the money caste, it applies also to the poor or uninfluential whites, although of course not to the same degree. Yet they, too, are victimized by cross-eyed justice, pounced on by prison guards, stuffed into sweat boxes on blistering summer days, and beaten with garden hose (since this leaves no tell-tale mark) for offenses too trivial to list. I have seen Negro and white thus beaten with rubber hose and have heard the pleadings of accused men begging for mercy when officers were attempting to torture out a confession. And often those very men who had been knocked out when arrested, and subjected to the inhumanities of what is so graciously termed justice, were discharged in court, their innocence quickly proven.

So when winter comes to the South, and winds rustle through the scrub oak and sigh mournfully through the pines, some folk liken the forlorn whisperings of the wind to the voice of Old Enoch, an aged slave who used to sing, in melancholy lamentations, the sorrows of the Negro.

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OLD DOC FOLEY

by CHARLOTTE HURD

THE exterior of the place had a sinister look. It called to mind deeds done in the dark, bodies carried out through an alley, carted away and dumped in the river, while righteous people slept.

But nothing so thrilling ever happened in Doc Foley's office. He wasn't that kind of doctor. There should be a question mark after the doctor when referring to Doc Foley. He was *that* kind of doctor.

The building in which the Doc ministered to the afflicted was in the poorer section of the city. Such offices usually are. It was a tumbledown, three-story wooden affair, squatting in a row of equally tumbledown buildings and stores. Both sides of the street were lined with rooming houses of the cheapest sort, some of them houses of another kind, thinly masquerading as rooming houses. There were hash-houses, paper and cigar stores, and a bakery. In berry season, the bakery window was filled with blueberry pies and cakes and the neighborhood children took great delight in standing at this window and picking out the blueberries and the flies on the cakes and pies.

Entrance to the Doc's office was gained through a narrow door opening directly from the street level. Over his bell hung a sign, reading "Ring twice for Dr."

As there was no other bell or name-plate, this sign seemed a bit superfluous.

To the door was a large pane of heavy glass, curtained with lace that had never associated with water. On opening this door, one ascended a narrow flight of steep stairs, terminating in a dark, foul-smelling hall. There was another staircase above, but the rooms on the top floor were vacant.

The Doc himself was quite distinguished looking. His black hair and pointed beard were just touched with gray. He was small, slender and stoop-shouldered. His voice was soft and his bright black eyes looked straight into the eyes of his patients. As he moved about, his movements were similar to those of a sparrow hunting a fat worm for breakfast

His linen and hands were immaculate, but this state did not reach to his consulting and waiting rooms, for they apparently never had been cleaned. The former contained several huge glass cabinets, filled with hideous instruments covered with the dirt of ages. In one corner, on a low platform, was an "electric chair." It had numerous wires, push buttons and signs around it, and often, after hearing a patient ring the entrance bell, the Doc's stenographer, working in a tiny room off the main office, would hear the buzz-buzz of the contraption.

The stenographer was in desperate need of a job to work in such a place. She had been out of work and had answered a blind ad. in a newspaper. When she reached the address given, she had been almost afraid to ring the bell, but ladies must eat.

In answer to her ring, the door clicked open, and she slowly mounted the narrow stairs. For what seemed to her an eternity, she stood there, in the dark, evil-smelling hall. She found out later that the Doc made his patients wait also.

Finally, the Doc stuck his head through the office door and told her to wait in the back parlor.

What a parlor! There were no windows. Double doors, leading into the office, were closed and curtained with red velour portieres, the weight of the dirt in them holding their folds stiff and motionless. There was a carpet that had never known the stirring touch of a broom. Two wooden rockers, a red plush sofa and a mahogany table completed the furnishings. No pictures adorned the dirty red-flowered wallpaper. Not a magazine nor a book was on the table. Doc Foley's patients were certainly able to read—for they read his circular letters.

The Doc finally ushered the waiting girl into his stuffy office and motioned her to a chair. He told her that he was extremely "fussy" about his stenographer. He asked her about forty questions and then said that he would write her his decision. The following day the astonished girl met the Doc at the door of her rooming house. He had come to check up on her. He then told her that she might report for work that evening at five. She was to work evenings and Saturday afternoons.

During the five months that the girl worked for Doc Foley, she found him to be polite, distant, but extremely harsh if anything went wrong. The first day, he told her that his work was a bit different from the usual office work, and that he expected her to work quickly and well, and to ask no questions.

He said nothing about her keeping her mouth shut outside office hours. He must have taken it for granted that she would. Certainly she told no one where she worked.

The Doc's business stationery was a marvel. His picture adorned it twice. His life story of his many wonderful cures was also printed on the letterhead.

After the stenographer had handed the Doc the first batch of typed letters she was scared half to death when the seemingly quiet Doc jumped from his chair, hurled the sheaf of papers back on her desk, and asked her what she meant by wasting paper in that manner. It seemed that the Doc wanted his letters run together in a continuous stream of type, minus paragraphing, margins or double spacing, and using both sides of a sheet. But he had neglected to say so. To teach her economy, he had her type the whole mess over.

In the evening, the girl worked in the main office, but on Saturday afternoon she was moved into the tiny room off it. If an unexpected patient called in the evening, she was unceremoniously hustled into the tiny room, the Doc politely carrying her typewriter and table, while the patient cooled his heels in the dark hall. This tiny room was entirely filled with great packages of circulars, empty bottles, and bottles filled with a dark liquid; wooden boxes of assorted sizes, empty tins, tins containing a yellow salve, and cardboard boxes filled with labels.

Each evening at five, when the girl arrived, Doc went for his supper, locking her in, and telling her not to pay any attention to the bell, as he put a sign on the outside door, saying when he would return.

The first night, the poor girl was so frightened that she could scarcely do her work. But one gets used to anything and after that she stole a few minutes each night looking around the big office. Women are so curious. There were no files to snoop in, as the Doc kept no carbon copies and destroyed all letters sent him.

But the letters he sent out! Pages and pages of dictation, but in no one letter was any ailment, symptom or disease given a name. The Doc's advertising appropriation must have been large.

The first letter sent by the Doc, to a prospective victim, ran thus:

"Dear Madam: I am indeed glad you have written me and I know that I can be of great help to you and your husband. He need not be a sufferer long and he can soon be returned to health and manly vigor if you will but follow my instructions closely. Please write me on return mail and enclose $10 (either check or money order) and I will at once send medicine and further explicit instructions."

In due time the money was received and the second letter went forth:

"Dear Madam: Your check for $10 received. Your husband is indeed (the Doc was fond of that word and used it profusely) a great sufferer and he needs my medicine No. 42. By express today I am sending you two bottles and one tin box. The bottles are marked A and B. The box contains a salve. If you will give him a teaspoonful of the medicine from the bottle marked A every morning on arising, and a tablespoonful from that marked B every night on going to bed, and tell him to use the salve freely several times a day on the afflicted surface, I am sure he will be much better in a month. When these bottles are empty, write me again, telling me how your husband is, and enclose check for $'0, (or money will do) and I will send you further medicines and advice at once."

So it went on, until the money gave out and the Doc lost a customer. But Barnum was right, and there are always plenty more. Such volumes of mail! The number of checks and money orders deposited daily by the Doc! The wooden boxes that he nailed up so neatly each night in the tiny room off the office! Letters came from East, West, North and South. It pays to advertise and the Doc knew how. His advertisements were fuller of promise than the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Letters from husbands, from wives, from young men—and men not so young—who wanted to be married, and—"Should they tell the girl?" Thus reversing the usual procedure of a girl wondering if she must tell a man her past. Amazing it was that the Doc could hold a customer as long as he did. Letters, checks, bottles of "dope." More letters, more checks, more bottles. The credulity and gullibility of fools is marvelous. Only when the money—that necessary evil with which they hoped to overcome a worse evil—gave out, did hope end. Possibly hope did not then end. But there is an end to money—and with it, an end to bottles marked A and B, and sometimes even C and D—"a severe case, so please send check for $20 by return mail."

Now, the Doc's stenographer didn't mind quite so much entering his place in the evening after dark, though there were always at least two loiterers around the door, who grinned knowingly if they caught her eye, or thought they had. But Saturday afternoon, when she had to enter the place in daylight, was too much for her. She gave notice. The Doc said he was sorry to lose her as she had been satisfactory (the only word of praise he had ever uttered to her) but added, "I don't blame you, Miss. This is hardly the work for a girl. I will find a young man, I think."

Before she left, the girl thought to confuse the Doc a bit, so she told him that her head had been bothering her greatly with pains and a sort of dizziness, and wanted to ask his advice as a physician. He replied that she had better see a good doctor at once. The girl looked so puzzled that the Doc hastened to add that he had meant, of course, a good specialist for head and eyes.

Perhaps old Doc Foley—he would be old now—is dead. Perhaps he is still filling bottles marked A and B, and sending out his circulars of golden promise. If not, there must be other "doctors" left to fill bottles marked A and B.

BOYD DIGESTS THE BOOKS

"THE Conquest of a Continent." (*Madison Grant.*) New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00—Dr. Grant here takes a hand in the Nazi Nordic game, by proving to his own entire satisfaction and that of Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn that this is a Nordic, blond, Protestant nation, sadly corrupted by the lesser breeds without the law. All immigration must cease. How the pure Anglo-Saxons of the South, as described by Erskine Caldwell and William Faulkner, for example, came to such sad state of degeneracy, unassisted by the Irish, the Slavs, and the Italians, is not—strange to say—explained.

"The Paris Front." (*Michel Corday.*) New York: E. P. Dutton. $5.00—This popular French novelist has been persuaded by H. G. Wells to publish his diary of the war years. The record is worth preserving, for M. Corday watched, listened to, and noted the day by day imbecilities of those nightmare years, which are now so incredible that people tend to forget them conveniently. The insistent theory of the Allies that any desire for peace was criminal stands out at every turn. The result, as we see it today, would seem to indicate that idiocy is its own reward.

"Wines. Their Selection, Care and Service." (*Julian Street.*) New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.00—A connoisseur presents in succinct form a guide to the pleasures of wining and dining which should be invaluable to the new generation of drinkers, and which the older generation can read with great profit. Mr. Street is no Saintsbury, nor does he pretend to emulate "Notes on a Cellar Book." His aim is practical rather than literary. Charts of vintage years since 1915, a map of the best wine districts in Europe, and a series of ideal menus complete the book's usefulness.

"Artist Among the Bankers." (*Will Dyson.*) New York: E. P. Dutton. $2.00—Better known as a cartoonist and etcher, the Australian artist, Will Dyson, now combines economic criticism with his other talents. Like Judge Brandeis, Mr. Dyson definitely challenges the notion that bankers are industrially creative. He describes the withering and destructive influence upon production of the domination of the world by financiers. Some years ago Mr. Dyson's Fat Man became in England the recognized symbol of predatory greed. His present effort is to do as much for Finance, holding up by way of contrast the ideals of the artist and the scientist. "The arrogance of practical people must be somewhat curbed."

"Jack Robinson." (*George Beaton.*) New York: Viking Press. $2.50—This first novel, written over a pseudonym, is the work of a newcomer, an Irishman born in Malta. The fact that it is described as "picaresque" should not deter the reader who remembers recent efforts to continue that tradition. Here the adventures are both mental and physical, and in the world of action, no less than in that of ideas, the author's impressions are rendered with vivacious originality. The book is quite outside the common run of contemporary fiction designed for digestive purposes.

"After the Great Companions." (*Charles J. Finger.*) New York: E. P. Dutton. $3.00—This time Mr. Finger writes of his adventures amongst books, not necessarily masterpieces. These are the good companions of all ages. Completely without self-consciousness of either the academic or iconoclastic variety, the author conveys the authentic thrill of reading, from boyhood to maturity, by one who has never feared to follow his own instincts in the matter and to say the pundits be damned.

THREE POEMS

by THEODORE DREISER

EVENING—MOUNTAINS

The shadowy hills
Aloud chant together
In audible crimson.
The high-born peaks
Gleaming in the mournful redness
Of that madman's eye—
The sun—
Declare their defiance
Of their loneliness.
And about them,
In the steely desert of the sky
Wander cloud camels,
Red,
Slow,
And
In the valleys below
Under a twilight spell
The earth itself
Enchanted
Rests.
And now
Some secret poet of the soul,
Finding this winding stream all black,
Flings upon its bosom
The poem of a star.

* * *

CHIEF STRONG BOW SPEAKS

For my beloved people
That the Gods might smile upon them
Send rain and snow to the mountains
Give them victory over their enemies
Protect them from wild beasts
And fierce and armed winters and summers
Give grain in abundance
Children in plenty
Protect all from evil and prowling spirits
That lurk to sicken
And slay.
Have I not prayed much?
Chanted much?
In silence watched
And guarded?
Yea,
Have counseled with the wisest
And strongest
Of my tribe
And yet,
See,
I am old,
I have seen much,
Known much,
And I now testify.
The strong as well as the weak are slain.
The young as well as the old die.
Both rain and snow fall indifferently
On all.
And spirits of evil waste and slay.
Yea, crops are destroyed
And at times are neither water nor food.
For the Gods are good
Yet only
When it is their whim or mood.

* * *

LOVE

Like a cactus in a desert
No moisture
No nourishing soil
Sand only,
And the hot breath
Of arid wastes
Blowing—blowing—
A relentless sun beating down
At night a silver, icy moon—
So, love blooms here
Love . . .
Sturdy and unafraid.

EDUCATION

Education is not what I know, but the quality of my thought. The satirist is, therefore, the greatest educator because he not only changes the channels of thought but changes the quality of thought.

—Benjamin De Casseres.

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